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Flu Vaccine Update from the City of Milwaukee Health Department

Today, the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has been notified by the State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that Chiron Corporation, the manufacturer of Fluvirin® influenza vaccine will be unable to ship about 50 million doses of vaccine (about one half of total United States inventory) this season. At this time, due to a Chiron manufacturing facility license suspension, it does not appear that Fluvirin® will be made available for public flu vaccination this season.

Aventis, another manufacturer of influenza vaccine, has begun shipment of 54 million doses of vaccine to public and private health providers. As a result of an unanticipated and probable limited supply of influenza vaccine this season, the CDC is recommending that vaccinations be reserved for high-risk individuals most vulnerable and susceptible to influenza and its complications. Persons in the high-risk groups listed below are urged to search locally for the vaccine if unavailable from their primary healthcare provider. Persons not falling into the categories listed below are urged to defer or forgo influenza vaccination this season.

High Risk Groups:

- Persons >65 years of age
- Persons with underlying chronic medical conditions
- Children 6-23 mos.
- Residents of nursing home and long-term care facilities
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers with direct patient care
- Caregivers of children < 6 mos.

In addition, 1.1 million doses of FluMist®, a "live flu vaccine" produced by MedImmune Vaccines, Inc. will be produced this season and is recommended for healthy persons 5-49 years of age. FluMist® is another option for healthcare providers with the exception of those that are involved in direct care of severely immuno-compromised patients.

The MHD continues to emphasize the good hygiene including frequent hand washing and encouraging people to stay at home from work and from school when they are sick are all good measures to reduce the transmission of flu in the community. Doctors can also prescribe antiviral medications for persons with influenza.

The MHD will continue to provide updates to healthcare providers and the public as new information develops regarding flu vaccine supply and distribution in the community. Citizens also can also find further information including the dates and locations of scheduled flu vaccination clinics conducted by the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) by going to the MHD website www.milwaukee.gov/health or by calling the MHD flu hotline at 414-286-3616 Monday through Friday between 12:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.